TODAY'S *Living*

Janet Poland, editor

He hears future in electric music

By Marie Kelly, staff reporter

A young musician from Churchville will add his sound to the Fourth Annual Festival of Philadelphia Electronic Music, which gets underway today.

Ken Montgomery, 24, whose family lives in Churchville, has been composing electronic music for three years.

"I'm not a trained musician," he said in a telephone interview from New York. "I'm pretty much self-taught." But he admits to being influenced and helped by Charles Cohon, the director of the electronic music festival.

Montgomery, a graduate of Council Rock High School, studied writing and filmmaking at Bucks County Community College. He also attended the Bay Area Synthesis Studio and the film school at New York University.

But he found he was more interested in the film's soundtracks than the films themselves.

Now he does soundtracks for students at NYU. "I don't get paid because they're students, but eventually they'll be professionals and I'll go along," he said. To support himself until then, he waits on tables at Rockefeller Center.

He also creates sounds for an off-off-Broadway company called the Center for Acting Process, whose current production is called "Perils of Pinocchio."

He also has a 45-minute tape, sold in area record stores and by mail order, called "gen Ken and equipment."

"I studied acting for a year, but decided I wanted to work with electronic music," he said. "It's definitely the thing of the future." He explained synthesizers have been in existence since 1966, so electronic music is relatively new.

KEN MONTGOMERY

Diversity is the main requirement for a film sound man, he said. "If a scene needs a melodic special, I can work in that context," he said. But he also does rhythmic sounds that are more harsh for other scenes.

His goal is to make a living performing and writing electronic music.

He will perform the second night of the festival, which runs until Saturday at the Temple University Theatre, 1619 Walnut St., Philadelphia.

"Everyone who plays in the show, plays original compositions," he said.